Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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PAGE 01 USUN N 00070 100317Z
ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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----------102722 100319Z /64
O P 100145Z JAN 78
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9019
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMETKASSY LAGOS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY BERLIN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 0070

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, SF, WA
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: FURTHER ACTION ON SCHEDULING OF PROXIMITY TALKS

REF: (A) USUN 018 (B) USUN 047 (C) STATE 307365 (NOTAL)

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR MCHENRY AM JANUARY 9, SWAPO UN REPRESENTATIVE THEO-BEN GURIRAB STATED THAT, IN RESPONSE TO
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PAGE 02 USUN N 00070 100317Z

WESTERN FIVE REQUEST THAT SWAPO RECONSIDER TIME AND VENUE OF PROPOSED PROXIMITY TALKS, (REF A) SWAPO ACCEPTS NEW YORK AS SITE OF PROPOSED TALKS BUT INSISTS ON THE 30TH JANUARY AS THE START-ING DATE. GURIRAB CITED PREVIOUS COMMITMENTS AS THE OBSTACLE TO EARLIER TALKS.
2. DURING CONTACT GROUP MEETING JANUARY 9, GROUP AGREED THAT, IN LIGHT OF SWAPO'S POSITION AND UN SECRETARY-GENERAL WALDHEIM'S

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

ABSENCE FROM NEW YORK UNTIL PM JANUARY 20 (REFTEL B), WESTERN FIVE AMBASSADORS IN PRETORIA SHOULD ARRANGE TO MAKE IMMEDIATE APPROACH TO FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA AND STATE:

"THE FIVE GOVERNMENTS REGRET THAT THEY HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO COMPLETE THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FORTHCOMING TALKS IN NEW YORK TO BEGIN ON 17 JANUARY. THIS DATE HAS RAISED DIFFICULTIES FOR OTHER PARTIES INCLUDING THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS WHO WILL NOT BY THEN HAVE RETURNED TO NEW YORK. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THE FIVE COUNTRIES WOULD BE GRATEFUL TO KNOW WHETHER MR. BOTHA COULD MAKE HIMSELF AVAILABLE FOR TALKS IN NEW YORK IN THE WEEK BEGINNING 30 JANUARY." END TEXT.

3. ON BEHALF OF CONTACT GROUP, AMBASSADOR MCHENRY PM JANUARY 9 ALERTED CHARGE (EKSTEEN) OF SOUTH AFRICAN MISSION TO UN TO SUBSTANCE OF ABOVE APPROACH, EKSTEEN REPLIED THAT HIS OFF-HAND REACTION IS THAT THE WEEK OF THE THIRTIETH WOULD BE A BAD DATE. HE STATED THAT A "NO CONFIDENCE DEBATE", IN WHICH FOREIGN POLICY IS EXPECTED TO BE A MAJOR ISSUE, IS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENT ON JANUARY 27TH AND IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE UNTIL FEBRUARY 3. EKSTEEN THEN ASKED IF THERE WOULD BE ANY POINT IN BOTHA'S COMING TO NEW YORK ON THE 17TH AS SCHEDULED. MCHENRY REPLIED THAT HE HAD NO INSTRUCTIONS IN THAT REGARD BUT THAT HE THOUGHT SUCH AN ACTION WOULD BE INCONSISTENT WITH THE CONCEPT OF PROXI-MITY TALKS. WHEN EKSTEEN ASKED IF THE DATE OF THE 17TH

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WAS DEFINITELY OFF, MCHENRY REPLIED THAT GROUP WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN SOUTH AFRICA'S RESPONSE TO THE ABOVE APPROACH AND THAT GROUP WOULD THEN TRY TO COORDINATE DATES.

4. BRITISH AMBASSADOR MURRAY HAS SINCE INDICATED TO USUN THAT, IF SOUTH AFRICANS DO NOT ACCEPT JANUARY 30TH AS THE STARTING DATE OF THE TALKS BUT SUGGEST THE 23TH, HE WOULD URGE CONTACT GROUP TO PUSH SWAPO TO ACCEPT THE 23RD. WE DOUBT THAT SUCH AN EFFORT WITH SWAPO WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL. SWAPO MAY HAVE LEGITI-MATE REASONS FOR CITING THE THIRTIETH, AND IT'S UNLIKELY THAT OTHER COUNTRIES, SUCH AS TANZANIA, WOULD SEE A ONE-WEEK DIFFERENCE ON THE DATE AS SWAPO INTRANSIGENSE.

5. WE ARE AWARE FROM FOURIE/GRAHAM DISCUSSIONS (REF C) THAT SOUTH AFRICA MAY HOPE TO USE OPENING OF THEIR LEGISLATURE ON JANUARY 27 TO ANNOUNCE DATE OF ELECTIONS. THEY MAY STILL DO SO, IN WHICH CASE IT IS MOSTLY LIKELY THAT SWAPO WOULD REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TALKS CITING ONE MORE INSTANCE OF SOUTH AFRICAN DUPLICITY. ON THE OTHER HAND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT PUBLIC AWARENESS OF SCHEDULED TALKS WILL FORESTALL SOUTH AFRICAN ANNOUNCEMENT ON ELECTION DATE -- AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THE TALKS.

WE CAN ONLY SPECULATE ON WHICH OF THESE ALTERNATIVES SOUTH AFRICA MAY CHOOSE TO FOLLOW. ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

ELECTION DATE PRIOR TO THE TALKS RUNS THE RISK OF UNDER-
MINING SOUTH AFRICA'S WHITE HAT STRATEGY IN THAT THE
FINGER COULD BE POINTED AT SOUTH AFRICA FOR THE FAILURE
OF THE TALKS TO OCCUR. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOUTH AFRICAN
PLANS FOR THE INTERNAL TRACK MAY BE SO FAR ADVANCED THAT
BOTHA WILL CHOOSE TO GO AHEAD WITH TRIP TO U.S., INCLUDING
MEDIA BLITZ ASPECTS IN SUPPORT OF A JANUARY 27 ANNOUNCEMENT.
BOTHA COULD STILL TRY TO PROJECT WHITE HAT IMAGE BY, AMONG
OTHER THINGS, STATING THAT DELAY OF TALKS WAS ONE MORE INDICATION
THAT WEST AND SWAPO WOULD DELAY NAMIBIA SOLUTIONS INTERMINABLY.
6. FOR BERLIN: SWAPO RESPONSE, CONTAINED PARA ONE ABOVE,
CLEARLY OVERTAKES NEED TO LOCATE AND APPROACH SWAPO PRESIDENT
NUJOMA.
MCHENRY
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